NEW YORK TIMES, APRIL 18, 1954, p. 3:

Vice President Nixon made an "off-the-record" speech to the American Society of Newspaper Editors on April 17. In speaking of the situation in Vietnam in the event the French withdraw, he said, "The United States as a leader of the free world cannot afford further retreat in Asia. It is hoped theUnited States will not have to send troops there, but if this Government cannot avoid it, the Administration must face up to the situation and dispatch forces."

The Times also reported that the State Dept. upheld Nixon's statement, stating that "he was stating a course of possible action which he was personally prepared to support under a highly unlikely hypothesis."